

1 Corinthians Part One

Lesson #14, Chapter 4:6-13

Review chapter 4 before beginning this lesson. Don't forget to spend time in prayer asking the Lord for His help and grace to study His Word.

1. Paul continues to counsel the Corinthians out of their ungodly attitudes toward their leaders. At the beginning of verse 6 Paul states, *Now these things*. The “things” being referred to can be found in the clue given in verse 6 when Paul states that he has applied these things figuratively to himself and Apollos. What figurative language did Paul use in the previous verses to describe himself and Apollos? See 1 Cor. 3:6-8, 10-15; 4:1-2.
2. Why did Paul write in figurative language according to the first part of verse 6?
3. What wrong thinking and poor attitudes did Paul desire to correct in the Corinthians (1 Cor. 4:6)?
4. Who were the Corinthians supposed to learn from according to verse 6?
5. Explain the power of that teaching tool. See also John 13:12-17; Phil. 1:29-30; 3:17; 2 Thess. 3:7-9; Heb. 13:7.

6. What does Paul mean when he states in verse 6, that you might learn not to exceed what is written? What has already been written and communicated that makes Paul object to the way the Corinthians were exceeding it? See 1 Cor. 1:12-13; 2:5; 3:5; 4:1.

7. The Corinthians took their respect and admiration for their pastoral leaders to an unhealthy level, yet how can we regard those who minister the Word of God to us in a healthy way? See 1 Cor. 9:7-14; Gal. 6:6; 1 Thess. 5:12-13; 1 Tim. 5:17-18.

8. How have you communicated that regard to your pastors and leaders recently?

9. Why is it important to bless and encourage those who teach and preach God's Word to you?

10. In verses 7-10 Paul's tone changes somewhat in order to make a point. First, who are the two different groups that Paul is contrasting in verses 7-10? What are the differences in their situations as described in verses 7-10?

11. Explain how the Corinthians' unhealthy fascination with their spiritual leaders led to pride in the Corinthians.

12. How were the Corinthians living according to Paul (verse 8)? What does he mean by that? See 2 Tim. 2:11-13; Rev. 5:10.

13. How are we supposed to live while still here on earth? See Matt. 20:24-28; 2 Cor. 4:5; Gal. 5:13.

14. What important spiritual truths does Paul remind the Corinthians about in verses 7-10?
 - a. See also 1 Cor. 1:10, 30-31; 3:9, 21-23.

The questions in 1 Corinthians 4:7 ought to make all of us stop and think. I like the New American Standard Bible's translation of the first question: "Who regards you as superior?" A young preacher once said to a friend of mine, "Please pray that I will stay humble." My friend replied, "Tell me, what do you have to be proud about?" Why would anybody regard us as superior? Perhaps it is our own biased opinion that makes us feel so important. The best commentary on 1 Corinthians 4:7 is the witness of John the Baptist, "A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven ... He [Christ] must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3:27, 30). ~ Warren Wiersbe¹

15. We aren't immune from this kind of spiritual pride cropping up in our church body. What are some ways it might manifest itself among us?

¹ Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary* (Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books, 1996), 1 Co 4:7.

16. How can we protect ourselves from this subtle sin of the heart?

17. What do we learn about our beloved apostle in verse 11?

18. It's hard to imagine Paul being in such circumstances but this wasn't the only time. See also 2 Cor. 6:4-6; 11:23-29; Phil. 4:10-14; 2 Tim. 3:10-11.

19. Why would God allow His choice servants to undergo such mistreatment and trials? See Matt. 8:19-20; Luke 6:40; 2 Cor. 4:7-12; 12:7-10; 2 Tim. 2:3, 8-10; 1 Pet. 2:19-20.

20. 1 Corinthians 4:9 contains a further reason for the sufferings of the apostles. First look up the word *exhibited* (NIV, NKJV *displayed* [Strong's #584]) and define.

21. Now look up the word *spectacle* [Strong's #2302] and share what you discover. Also see Heb. 10:32-33 where it's used in a similar way.

22. One commentary writer stated, "We can only admire such deep devotion to Christ, such sacrificial living, such amazing loyalty, such willing acceptance of suffering, deprivation and loss, such humility and spirituality. One wonders what the reaction of the apostle would be to present-day affluence and Christian living."² It does make you wonder doesn't it? What would Paul say about how you are living? Are you trying to live as though you were reigning with Christ already or are you living as Christ did, as Paul did—as a servant?
23. What encouragement for servant living did you gain from today's lesson?

Hast Thou No Scar?

Hast thou no scar?
No hidden scar on foot, or side, or hand?
I hear thee sung as mighty in the land,
I hear them hail thy bright, ascendant star,
Hast thou no scar?

Hast thou no wound?
Yet I was wounded by the archers, spent,
By ravaging beasts that compassed Me, I swooned:
Hast thou no wound?

No wound? No scar?
Yet, as the Master shall the servant be,
And pierced are the feet that follow Me;
But thine are whole: can he have followed far
Who has no wound nor scar?
~ Amy Carmichael

²Jack Hunter, *What the Bible Teaches: Ritchie New Testament Commentaries* (Kilmarnock, Scotland: John Ritchie Ltd., 1986), pgs. 50-51.